

CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND THE SILVER STATE EAST FIBER OPTIC PROJECT

This booklet is presented by AT&T to share the history and archaeology discovered during the cultural resource management phase of the Silver State East Fiber Optic Project. The 589 mile fiber optic line, from Spanish Fork, Utah, to Reno, Nevada, crosses public land. The project is required by law to mitigate any damage it causes to significant cultural resources, such as historic or prehistoric archaeology sites. This process began with an archaeological survey of the proposed route. Crews of archaeologists walked the entire line, recording any archaeological sites they discovered. More than two hundred were found, including historic buildings, roads,

and railroads, as well as prehistoric camps and scatters of stone tools. The archaeologists evaluated each site to determine which ones were historically important, or likely to contain valuable archaeological data. The fiber optic route was changed to avoid most of these important sites, or special equipment was used to drill under them, and the line was installed well below any buried artifacts. But several extensive historic transportation and communication sites—such as the Lincoln Highway and old US Highway 50—could not be avoided. Time Travel, and a historic marker placed in Ely, Nevada, serve as mitigation for these sites.

SIGNS ALONG THE WAY



Highway mileposts can be used to locate points of interest described in Time Travel. These show the highway number, county, and distance east of the county line. The miles begin with zero at the western boundary of each county, so for eastbound travelers the mileage increases as you go. If you are traveling west, it decreases. The

mileposts in Time Travel are the ones nearest each point of interest, so start keeping track in advance as you approach.



The Pony Express trail crosses US Highway 50 at several locations between Carson City and Austin.



Watch for Lincoln Highway signs, replicas of the original markers, and logos on the old culverts.



The Oregon-California Trails Association has marked the Carson River Route.



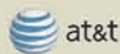
Nevada Historical Markers provide accounts of historical sites along US Highway 50.



These red-capped white pipes mark the route of the Silver State East Fiber Optic Line.



Time Travel is produced by MACTEC Engineering and Consulting, Inc., on behalf of AT&T and Land Services Inc. The US Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management provided agency oversight.



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Time Travel

Your Trip Through Nevada History on US Highway 50



This short booklet is written for the traveler. It belongs on the dashboard, folded open, or tucked within easy reach down between the seats. It follows the history of transportation and communication from ox-drawn emigrant wagons to today's instant transmission of words, pictures, and sound. And it follows your journey across Nevada, pointing out a few places along the way where major themes from that history—Emigrants, the Central Route, Regional Railroads and Wagon Roads, and US Highway 50—make their way into the present.

EMIGRANTS

More than 250,000 people crossed the North American continent to California between 1841 and 1860. They traveled west to establish homes, farms, and businesses, and with the gold rush of 1849 they also followed the dream of instant wealth. The California Trail branched south from the Oregon Trail west of Fort Hall, and followed the Humboldt River across the Great Basin.



After braving the Forty Mile Desert, the parties of emigrants climbed the east slope of the Sierra Nevada either up the Truckee River Canyon or farther south in West Carson Canyon. The wave of settlers crested in the 1860s, but their trails remained important as everyday commerce and travel replaced the emigrants' once in a lifetime journey west.

Simpson Expedition	1859	
Pony Express	1860-61	
Overland Stage & Telegraph	1860-69	
Lincoln Highway	1913-26	
Modern US Highway 50		

Nevada Central Railroad (1880-1938)

CENTRAL ROUTE

The Central Route was the shortest, most direct way across the heart of the Great Basin. Exploration of the Central Route was prompted by the need for faster mail delivery between the eastern US, via Salt Lake City, and California. Major Howard Egan, a Mormon pioneer, scouted the first trail in 1855. In 1859, the US Army assigned Captain James Simpson the task of surveying a wagon road between Camp Floyd, south of Salt Lake City, and the Carson Valley, which was linked to California by existing roads. Simpson's route was an immediate success, and in a few months the Pony Express and the Overland Stage were carrying mail, passengers, and freight over the Central Route. The Overland Telegraph



followed, making the speedy but expensive Pony Express obsolete. In 1869, the transcontinental railroad was completed along the Humboldt River, monopolizing cross country shipping and passenger service. The heyday of the Central Route was over, although it continued into the 20th century as a supply line for the mining camps of central Nevada. The advent of automobile travel in the 20th century brought more travelers to the Central Route—on the Lincoln Highway and then US Highway 50—but it could still be characterized in 1986 as the "Loneliest Road in America."

Ely funeral procession, early 1920s. Note the Lincoln Highway marker in the foreground (East Ely Railroad Museum).

ELY AND THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY

The original 1913 plan for the Lincoln Highway went southwest from Salt Lake City around the southern end of the Great Salt Lake Desert, and then on to Ely. Utahans, along with northern Nevada and California interests, had other ideas. They wanted a road straight west from Salt Lake City to Wendover, diverting travelers to San Francisco along the Humboldt River route. Construction was already underway on the Lincoln Highway west of Ely, on the Central Route, and Utah's refusal to complete the Ely segment was seen as a breach of faith. The issue



kept the Lincoln Highway Association and the State of Utah at loggerheads from 1919 to 1925. The Utah segment was passable—just not improved to Lincoln Highway standards—so for all practical purposes the Lincoln Highway did come through Ely. Meanwhile, the Salt Lake City to Wendover route opened in 1925, as part of the Victory Highway. In 1930, the new road south from Wendover to Ely was ceremoniously designated the Lincoln Highway.



Nevada Northern's Locomotive No. 93, in Steptoe Valley (Northern Nevada Railway Museum).

NEVADA NORTHERN RAILWAY



The Nevada Northern Railway was built in 1906, at a time when the adoption of electrical power was creating an enormous demand for copper. The railroad was key to developing the Ely area copper deposits. Spur lines hauled ore from the mines at Ruth to the McGill smelter, and the main line carried "blister copper" 138 miles north to Cobre, then east for further refining and eventual sale on the world market. The Nevada Northern's working life ended in 1983, however it remains one of the best preserved historic railroads in the nation. The East Ely Railroad Museum occupies the original depot, and the Northern Nevada Railway Museum operates restored steam and diesel trains from the same location.

ROADHOUSES

The old wagon road way stations evolved into roadhouses in the automobile age. Cars made highway travel easier, and more popular, and turned roadhouses into regional social centers. Notable Highway 50 roadhouses between Ely and the Utah border included Major's Place, once an important wagon road junction, and the Sacramento Inn—at Sacramento Pass—which boasted a bar and hardwood dance floor.



Old US Highway 50 in the canyon below the modern road, east of Conners Pass.



Major's Place in 1952 (Donna and Al Fredrick).



This prominent stone structure was a storage building constructed in the early 1900s on the site of Shekel's Hotel, a way station of the Hamilton stage road.



A few of the artifacts recovered from the Graham Alley privy. Note the medicine bottles, cow jaw, and doll's head.

GRAHAM ALLEY PRIVY

The Silver State East Fiber Optic Line passed through the oldest part of downtown Ely, under the pavement of Clark Street. A backhoe excavating a hole for junction boxes uncovered an historic privy—essentially a buried time capsule from the era before indoor plumbing. Privies, along with their main function, were also trash pits—not to mention the fact that anything accidentally falling in would likely stay there unless it was particularly valuable. The excavation recovered more than 6,000 artifacts. They dated between 1860 and 1907, when today's Clark Street was known as Graham Alley. Use of the privy ended around 1906, when

the Nevada Northern Railway was built through downtown. The railroad apparently passed directly over the privy location, and it would have been torn down and filled in at that time. The artifacts offered both expected and unexpected glimpses of life in Ely at the turn of the 20th century. There were the usual liquor bottles, butchered cow bone, and broken chamber pots, but also a microscope slide—probably from a nearby drugstore—a china doll's head, turkey and duck bones, and a Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup bottle. This morphine-based pain reliever was, at the time, a popular remedy for teething pains in children.

Robinson Summit

50

Ruth

Murray Summit

Ely

White Pine Public Museum
2000 Aultman St.
775-289-4710

Northern Nevada Railway Museum
775-289-2085

East Ely Railroad Depot Museum
1100 Avenue A
775-289-1663

McGill

Central Pacific Railroad (1869)

Eureka and Palisade Railroad (1875-1930)

Nevada Northern Railway (1906-1983)

US HIGHWAY 50

Travel changes through time. Vehicles come and go; speeds increase; even our reasons for getting from one place to another are different today than a hundred years ago. The roads we travel also change. The "Loneliest Road in America" began in the mid 1800s as a string of wagon roads and evolved into a highway which takes a traveler across Nevada in a single day. Much of US Highway 50 follows the route selected in 1913 for the Lincoln Highway, and was absorbed into the newly established



national highway system in 1926. In places, the modern highway is built over the older versions, especially on the wide valley floors where the shortest distance between two points is the same straight line it was a hundred years ago. But in the canyons, as you drive over the various passes, you will see the old roadbed and crumbling pavement—the remains of the Lincoln Highway and old US Highway 50—winding in and out of the draws and ravines.

REGIONAL RAILROADS AND WAGON ROADS

The remote mining camps which are a mainstay of Nevada history depended on the outside world for everything from food to picks and shovels. These needs were met by a system of wagon roads which followed the mining industry across the state. Roads first linked the Comstock with its California supply points, and then extended eastward along the Central Route with the discoveries at Reese River, Eureka, and Hamilton during the 1860s. The transcontinental railroad changed this pattern in 1869, making it easier and cheaper to move goods by rail part way



across the state, and then freight them south on wagon roads to the interior mining districts. Regional railroads, or short lines, were then built to replace the busier roads or—as was the case with the Nevada Northern—actually made development of certain districts possible. The Eureka and Palisade Railroad connected Eureka to the Central Pacific in 1875; the Nevada Central connected Austin to it in 1880; and the Nevada Northern linked Ely to the transcontinental line in 1906.

THE CENTURY ATLAS.
NEVADA AND UTAH
Copyright, 1915, by The Century Co., New York.
Size of type indicates relative importance of places.
State Capitals thus: @ County Seats thus: @
(Mary B. Ansari Map Library, University of Nevada, Reno)

Cover Photo
Approaching East Ely on US Highway 50
(The Lincoln Highway Digital Image Collection, Special Collections Library, University of Michigan)

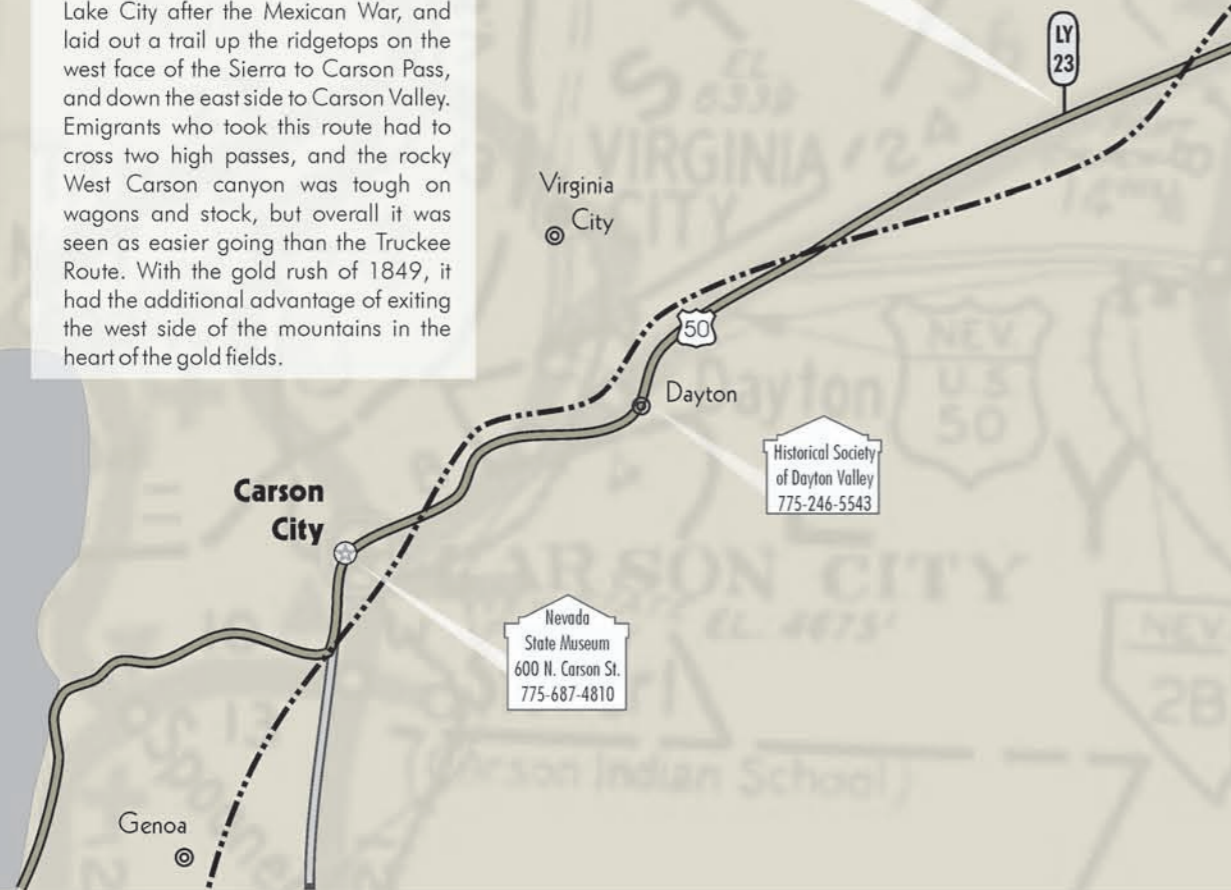
CARSON RIVER ROUTE



Emigrants began using the Carson River Route in 1848, and it quickly became the main trail to California. From the Humboldt Sink, it went south through the Forty Mile Desert to the Carson River, followed the Carson River into the Sierra Nevada, and crossed the mountains south of Lake Tahoe. A group of Mormon travelers looking for a way through the Sierra Nevada from the California side discovered the Carson River Route. They were returning to Salt Lake City after the Mexican War, and laid out a trail up the ridgetops on the west face of the Sierra to Carson Pass, and down the east side to Carson Valley. Emigrants who took this route had to cross two high passes, and the rocky West Carson canyon was tough on wagons and stock, but overall it was seen as easier going than the Truckee Route. With the gold rush of 1849, it had the additional advantage of exiting the west side of the mountains in the heart of the gold fields.



Looking westward toward the Sierra Nevada from US Highway 50 east of Dayton. Having survived the Forty Mile Desert, the next challenge for the emigrants was the mountain range in the distance.

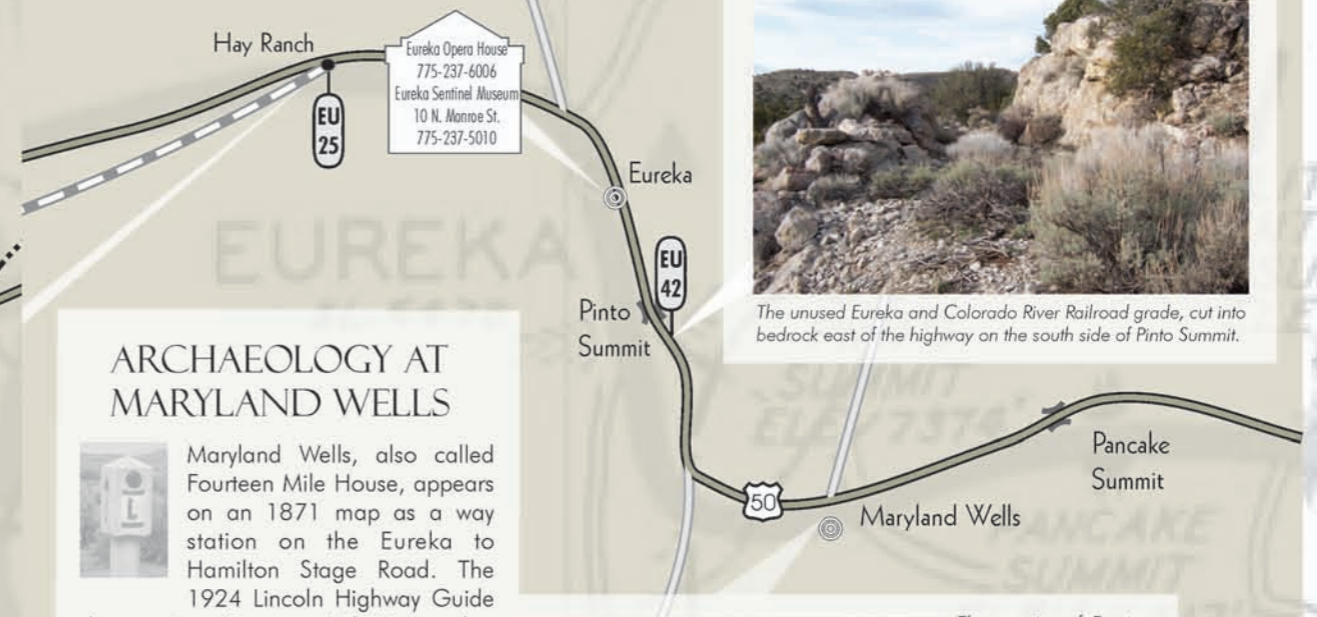


EUREKA AND COLORADO RIVER RAILROAD



Relaying freight from Eureka to Hamilton and Pioche proved so lucrative that owners of the Eureka and Palisade undertook an ambitious expansion of their railroad. They would replace the wagon roads with a rail line extending more than 200 miles southeast to the Colorado River. Work

began on the Eureka and Colorado River Railroad in 1881, however the scheme was abandoned after about 10 miles of construction, before any track was laid. The grade is still visible from US Highway 50, on both sides of the road east and west of Pinto Summit.



The unused Eureka and Colorado River Railroad grade, cut into bedrock east of the highway on the south side of Pinto Summit.

ARCHAEOLOGY AT MARYLAND WELLS



Maryland Wells, also called Fourteen Mile House, appears on an 1871 map as a way station on the Eureka to Hamilton Stage Road. The 1924 Lincoln Highway Guide also mentions Fourteen Mile House, but notes it is deserted, with water fit only for radiators. Using the old maps, and other archival information, the Silver State East archaeological survey identified a likely location for the station. Test excavations found the remains of historic features, amethyst glass, brick fragments, and other artifacts. A large scale excavation then recovered more than 21,000 artifacts from the site. These included domestic items such as dinnerware fragments, a door latch, pieces of a woodstove, wagon parts, and horseshoeing materials. The excavators also exposed a line of buried wooden posts which formed the wall of a shed or outbuilding.



The remains of Fourteen Mile House in 1920 (The Lincoln Highway Digital Image Collection, Special Collections Library, University of Michigan).



The excavation blocks at Maryland Wells (Summit Envirosolutions).



1876 Eureka and Palisade Railroad Advertisement (Nevada Historical Society)

EUREKA AND PALISADE RAILROAD

This narrow gauge line was built in 1875 linking Eureka to the Central Pacific Railroad at Palisade, eighty four miles to the north. Eureka was a major silver and lead producer from 1868 into the 1880s. The Eureka and Palisade hauled passengers, freight and bullion. Its Eureka terminal connected with wagon roads to Hamilton, and south to Pioche. The mining industry went through a period of depression in the 1880s, but revived again, along with the railroad, between 1906 and 1910. Raw ore was transported



north to the main line, and then sent east to smelters at Salt Lake City. Floods in 1920 wiped out 11 miles of the Eureka and Palisade track, and this spelled the end for profitable mining in Eureka. The industry had grown dependent on the cheap transport of ore, but two years passed before the track was repaired and the railroad resumed operations. The Eureka Palisade still played a role in local transportation, but was no longer a factor in ore hauling. It finally ended service in 1938.

Austin
Historical Society
180 Main Street
775-964-1202



WAY STATIONS, RANCHES, AND WATER

Travel evolved in the 19th and 20th centuries from horse-powered to horsepower, but travelers' needs remained the same. They wanted meals and beds, and their transportation, steel or otherwise, needed water, food or fuel. Three places between Hickison Summit and Eureka are typical examples of stopovers along the Central Route which provided these services. Hay Ranch, located south of US Highway 50 just west of Devil's Gate, was one of the largest ranches in the region during the 1800s. It provided a thousand tons of hay each year for mule teams pulling freight wagons between Austin



and Eureka. Willows Station, a few miles south of the highway and 25 miles from Hay Ranch, was a Lincoln Highway stopover which began as a way station for the Overland Stage. (The original Lincoln Highway was south of US Highway 50 in this area.) Grimes Ranch, 15 miles further west, showed how individual ranchers supplemented their income by catering to the first automobile travelers. The 1924 Lincoln Highway Guide notes that lodging, meals, a store, gas, and oil would be found there, but not necessarily water, since "Floyd Grimes...has to haul water for his ranch and may be low."



View to US Highway 50 from the ruins of Hawes Station.

HAWES STATION

Hawes Station was built in 1851, in a gap in the hills where emigrants left the Carson River to avoid a canyon known as The Narrows. Like many of the early stopping points, Hawes Station continued operation into the 1860s as a way station on the Overland Mail and Stage route. The ruins of the station are visible on the north side of the highway, at the edge of a dry lakebed.



Forty Mile Desert



The Forty Mile Desert was perhaps the most arduous part of the emigrants' journey. Their diaries recorded its horrors, describing the decaying carcasses of oxen, horses, and mules—and more than a few graves.

Discarded furniture, weapons, and hardware littered the trail. These vital possessions had been carried more than a thousand miles, only to be abandoned in the desert sand to lighten the load.

CH 12
Leeterville

50

Fallon

Churchill County
Museum and Archives
1050 South Maine Street
775-423-3677



Ragtown Station in the 1880s (Thompson and West History of Nevada).

RAGTOWN

Ragtown, in the cottonwoods along the Carson River, marked the end of the Forty Mile Desert. Grass and water meant rest and recuperation for livestock, and an opportunity for emigrants to refresh themselves for the continuing journey. Ragtown may have been named for the clothing spread out to dry on the brush along the riverbank. Washing clothes would have been an important order of business, after the stagnant waters of the Humboldt Sink—or no water at all in the desert. The name might also have come



from the tattered shelters California merchants built each spring, and then abandoned in the fall when the last of the wagon trains passed through. Ragtown was one of many locations along the California Trail where enterprising individuals sold and traded food, supplies, and livestock with the emigrants. A permanent trading post replaced these seasonal entrepreneurs in 1854. Ragtown also served as a station on the Overland Mail and Stage route.



The ruins at Sand Springs, Sand Mountain in the background.



Excavating the Sand Springs Pony Express Station (University of Nevada, Reno Department of Anthropology).

PONY EXPRESS ARCHAEOLOGY

In the early 1970s, a shifting sand dune near Sand Mountain revealed a stone foundation and a few historic artifacts. Were these the walls of the Sand Springs Pony Express station, thought to be located at the old Sand Springs town site, almost a mile away? In 1976, a team of archaeologists from the University of Nevada, Reno, excavated the site. They worked room by room, exposing a layer of dark, cultural sediment and several thousand artifacts. These eventually answered the question, and others about life at a Pony Express station. The ruins dated to



the early 1860s and they were, in fact, the Sand Springs station. The dig uncovered a number of artifacts from everyday life, such as tableware, shaving mugs, tobacco pipes and other personal items. There were also weapons, percussion caps and bullets, and horseshoes—just the things needed at a remote outpost where fresh horses and riders were kept at the ready. Carrying the mail was also a business enterprise, and the site included pen points, ink bottles, and graphite leads, for the inevitable paperwork.

SAND MOUNTAIN RECREATION AREA Follow the signs to the Sand Springs Pony Express Station.

Sand Springs Pass

LINCOLN HIGHWAY CROSSES THE FALLON SINK

The Lincoln Highway between Salt Wells and Sand Springs crossed practically level but seasonably impassable terrain. In wet weather, the flats became a muddy quagmire. The rest of the year, a continuous traffic of freight wagons left axle-deep ruts in the roadway. These wagons, sometimes hitched together in twos and threes and pulled by work horses or mule teams, still plied the roadways in the first decades of the 20th century, delivering supplies to mining camps in central Nevada. In 1924, with financial help from



the Lincoln Highway Association, a road grade "three feet above the surface of the alkali flats [and] graveled to a depth of five inches" was constructed across the Fallon Sink, completing one of the last links in the transcontinental automobile highway.



Culvert on Four-Mile Flat (The Lincoln Highway Digital Image Collection, Special Collections Library, University of Michigan).



Raised roadbed under construction (The Lincoln Highway Digital Image Collection, Special Collections Library, University of Michigan).



The hazards of crossing the Fallon Sink (The Lincoln Highway Digital Image Collection, Special Collections Library, University of Michigan).

REPEATERS AND OPTICAL AMPLIFICATION



Optical amplification station at Edwards Creek Valley

The dots and dashes of Morse code and the laser pulses in a fiber optic line travel at the speed of light. But neither one can cross a continent without help along the way. The telegraph needed repeaters to boost its battery powered electrical signal, and the light waves in the fiber optic line require their own periodic recharging. Optical amplification stations—the small, squarish buildings you see every 30 miles along the fiber optic route—are the modern equivalent of the telegraph repeaters from a hundred and fifty years ago.



By the early 1920s, the Lincoln Highway Guide lists stops of Alpine Ranch and Westgate, but only ruins remained at the Cold Springs station (The Lincoln Highway Digital Image Collection, Special Collections Library, University of Michigan).

COLD SPRINGS

The Pony Express, Overland Stage, and Overland Telegraph were all at Cold Springs during the 1860s. The remains of the Overland Stage and the transcontinental telegraph station are located just west of the highway, and the Cold Springs Pony Express station is a mile and a half to the east. The stage and telegraph stations were constructed in 1861, and the Pony Express station was built in 1860, although it later shared the stage station site. The short-lived Pony Express ended in 1861. The telegraph and stage lines



abandoned the station in 1869, although Cold Springs continued as a stopover for local freight haulers. University of Nevada, Reno, archaeologists explored the Cold Springs site in 1978. The relatively intact buildings held traces of basic, day-to-day activities, and two of the "rooms" had deep organic deposits, suggesting they were actually corrals. The telegraph equipment was undoubtedly removed when the station closed, leaving only a few insulator fragments behind.



The abandoned Nevada Central Railroad grade just west of Austin.

NEVADA CENTRAL RAILROAD



One investor in the Nevada Central Railroad described mining camp railroads as a form of "railroad gambling." At any time, failure in the mines could turn the investment into a railroad to nowhere. The Nevada Central connected the Reese River mining district to the Central Pacific Railroad at Battle Mountain. Its story ended just as the investor feared, although it took almost sixty years to unfold. The railroad was conceived in the 1870s, but not completed until 1880, after the Reese River boom peaked. It scrambled year after year to pay its way, including periods when livestock hauling generated more income than mining freight. The Nevada Central was dismantled and sold for scrap in 1938.